

Amendments to the Drawings:

Please replace Figs. 1 and 3 currently in the application with the enclosed Figs. 1 and 3. Additions are indicated by red circles on the enclosed annotated copies of Figs. 1 and 3.

In Figure 1, appropriate labels ("A", "B", and "C") are added to the three subsections of the figure.

In Figure 3, appropriate labels ("A", "B", "C", "D", "E", and "F") are added to the six subsections of the figure.

Attachments following the last page of this Amendment and Response:

Replacement Sheet (2 pages)

Annotated Sheet Showing Change(s) (2 pages)

REMARKS

Status of the claims

Claims 1-9 and 11-33 are pending and claims 22-33 are under consideration in this application, claims 1-9 and 11-21 having been withdrawn from consideration on the grounds that they are allegedly drawn to a separate inventions. Claim 22 is objected to and claims 23-33 are rejected.

In claim 23, the text "alkanoyl, formyl, C₁₋₄" has been added, the term "bezoyl" has been corrected to "benzoyl", and the word "or" has been added to the end of line 15. These amendments are supported throughout U.S. patent 4,799, 834 (the '834 patent; e.g., at claim 1 and column 2, lines 10-22) referred to in the instant specification (e.g., at page 5, lines 21-26). New claims 34-39, corresponding to claims 28-33 but dependent on claim 24, have been added.

None of the amendments made herein add new matter.

Applications respectfully request that the minor amendments made herein, some at the suggestion of the Examiner, be entered. Should the amendments made herein be entered, claims 22-24, and 28-39 will be pending and under consideration in this application, claims 1-9, 11-21, and 25-27 having been cancelled without prejudice to their being presented in a separate application, and claims 34-39 having been added.

Claim Objections

Claim 22 is objected to on the grounds that "neuronal" is allegedly misspelled as "neural." While respectfully submitting that "neural" is a correct adjective corresponding to the noun "nerve", in order to expedite prosecution of the instant application, Applicants have replaced "neural" with "neuronal".

Claims 22 and 24 are objected to on the grounds that the claims should spell out the relevant chemical structure. Applicants have replaced the informal name of the compound (Y-27632) with the term "(+)-trans-4-(1-aminoethyl)-1-(4-pyridylcarbamoyl)-cyclohexane or a pharmaceutically acceptable addition salt thereof", which is supported throughout the '834 patent

(e.g., at column 8, lines 8-9 and 17-18, and claim 7) referred to in the instant specification (see above) and adds no new matter.

Applicants respectfully submit that the claim objections are moot in light of the above described amendments.

Objection to the Specification

The description of the drawings is objected on the grounds that drawing subsections are not individually described. The description of the drawings has been amended to address this objection. In addition, other text referring to the drawings and Figs. 1 and 3 have been amended to conform them to the amended description of the drawings. Minor amendments to conform the text referring to the drawings to U.S. Patent and Trademark Office style are also made.

Applicants respectfully submit that the objection to the specification is moot in light of the above described amendments.

35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, rejection

Claims 23-33 stand rejected on the grounds that they allegedly contain subject matter that was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventors, at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention.

From the comments on page 4, lines 5-10, of the Office Action, Applicants understand the Examiner's position to be that the term "in a nerve" is not supported by the specification. While the rejection is moot in view of the amendment of claim 23, Applicants disagree with this position. Thus, in the spinal cord injury experiments described in Example III (pages 30-35) of the instant specification, Y27632 was delivered "in a nerve". In light of this consideration, Applicants reserve the right to include this limitation in new claims in the present application, in new claims to be added to the present application, and/or in the claims of a separate application.

Applicants respectfully submit that, in view of the amendment to claim 23, the comments on page 4, lines 11-16, of the Office Action are moot.

From the comments on page 5, lines 1-13, of the Office Action, Applicants understand the Examiner's position to be that: (a) the specification has not incorporated by reference the scope of the full noted structures of the '834 claim 1 as those compounds to be incorporated, nor are these compounds noted as those with the activity of the '834 compounds in blocking Rho kinase or Rho-associated kinase; (b) the specification fails to specifically note what is intended via the recitation of 'other compounds within this family of compounds that inhibit Rho kinase' either via structure or function (not recited in the claim); and (c) claim 23 references the antagonists having the functions recited in the "wherein" clauses of claim 23, but that reference is made to data specific to Y-27632 with no other compounds or scope of compounds apparently noted to provide for the functional relationships.

Applicants disagree with this position.

First, Applicants have added an explicit limitation requiring that the antagonist "antagonizes Rho-associated kinase activity"; this amendment is supported throughout the specification (see, for example, the second quotation below). In addition, Applicants note that the specification recites at page 5, lines 21-26:

kinases activated by Rho, such as Rho-associated kinase, are antagonist candidates. Thus, compounds such as Y-27632 (U.S. Pat. No. 4,997,834), that block Rho-associated kinase activity, thereby inactivating the Rho signaling pathway, are also embodiments of this invention. Thus, the use of other compounds within this family of compounds as described in U.S. Pat. No. 4,997,834 that inhibit Rho kinase are also considered within the scope of this invention.

Furthermore, at page 9, line 30, to page 10, line 4, the specification recites:

Preferred antagonists include: ... compounds such as Y-27632 that antagonize Rho-associated kinase (Somiyo, 1997, Nature, 389:908-910; Uehata, et al., 1997, Nature 389:990-994; U.S. Pat. No. 4,997,834).

Applicants clearly identify a well-defined and circumscribed set of compounds as the family of compounds which is described in the '834 patent. That family is defined both structurally and functionally by the language of claim 1. Of the compounds within the defined family compounds specified in structural terms by claim 1, those that antagonize Rho-associated kinase activity are within the scope of the claimed invention. Methods for identifying

compounds that antagonize Rho-associated kinase activity are well known in the art. Indeed, as quoted above, the instant specification cites prior art [e.g., Uehata, et al. (1997) Nature 389:990-994] that teaches how to test for Rho-associated kinase antagonist activity.

While disagreeing with the comments on page 5, lines 13-20, of the Office Action, in order to expedite prosecution of the instant application, Applicants have deleted the limitations at issue and thus respectfully submit that the comments are moot.

In light of the above considerations, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

In summary, for the reasons set forth above, Applicants maintain that the pending claims patentably define the invention. Applicants request that the Examiner reconsider the rejections as set forth in the Office Action, and permit the pending claims to pass to allowance.

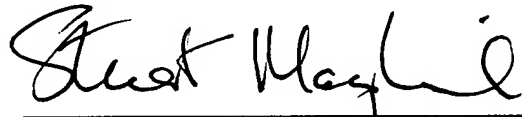
If the Examiner would like to discuss any of the issues raised in the Office Action, Applicants' undersigned representative can be reached at the telephone number listed below.

Enclosed is a request for an automatic extension of time and a check in payment of the extension in time. Please charge any other fees or make any credits to Deposit Account No. 06-1050, referencing Attorney Docket No. 12552-003001.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: _____

3/15/05



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(A)

MAG

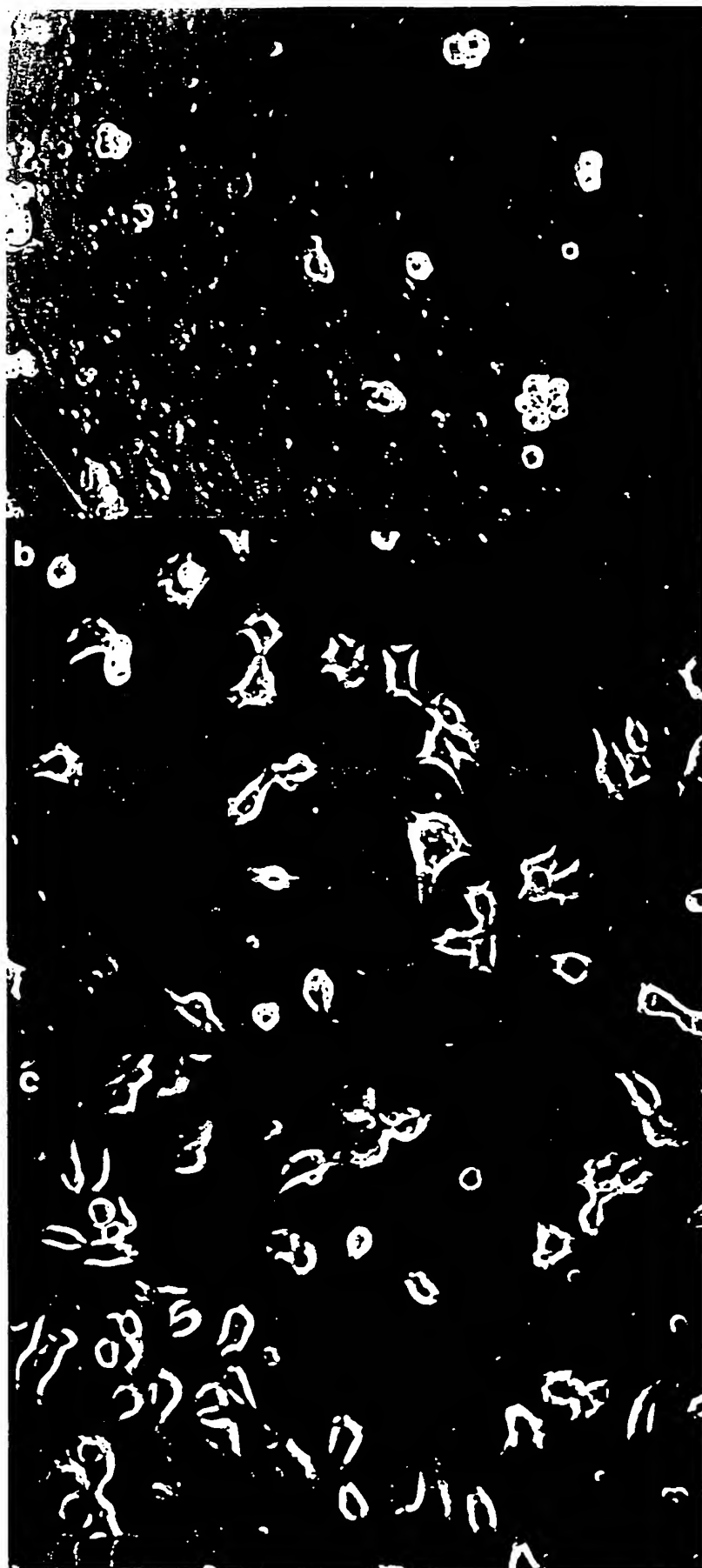
(B)

MAG
+
C3

Figure 1

(C)

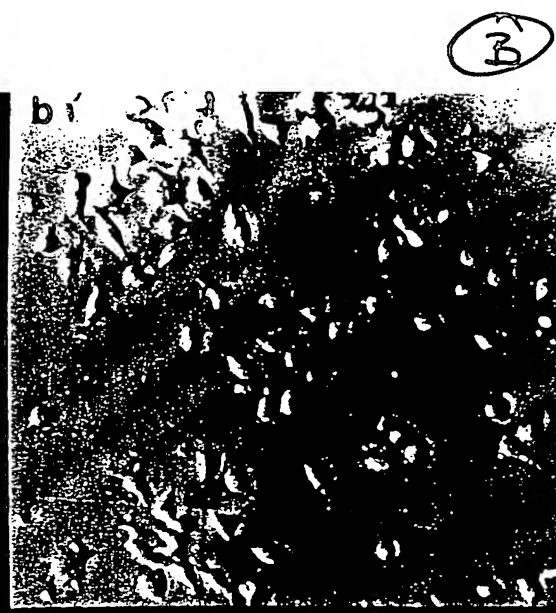
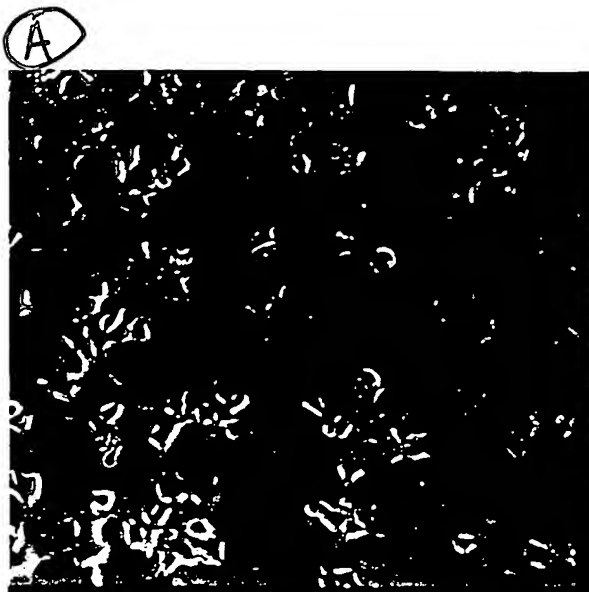
PLL



Mock PC12

Dominant Negative PC12

Laminin



MAG

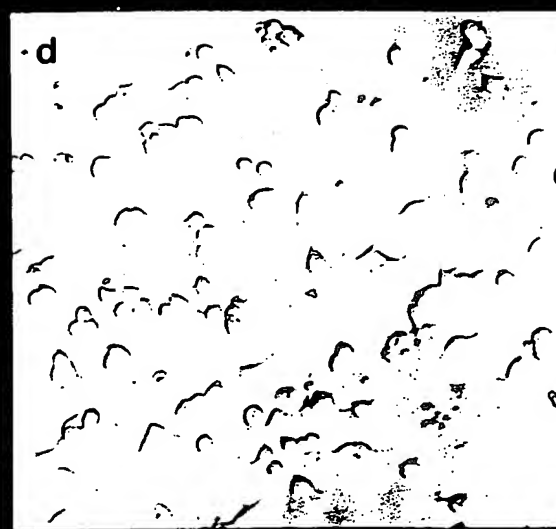
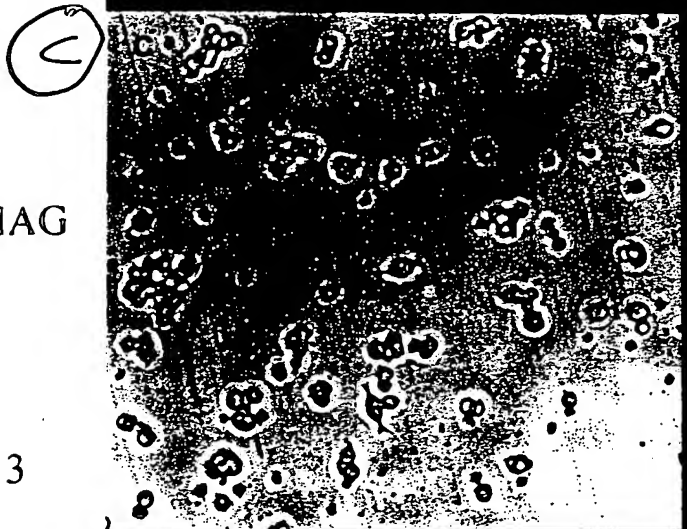


Figure 3

MAG + C3

